



Moderators' Report

Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCE Drama & Theatre (9DR0)

9DR0 / 01: Devising

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9DR0/01 Devising Non Examined Assessment (NEA)

Introduction

This component is internally assessed /externally moderated.

In this component students will develop their creative and exploratory skills to devise an original performance. The starting point for this devising process is an extract from a performance text and an influential theatre practitioner.

In their creative explorations, students will learn how text can be manipulated to communicate meaning to audiences and they will begin the process of interpretation. They will gain an understanding of how a new performance could be developed through the practical exploration of the theatrical style and use of conventions of the chosen practitioner.

Candidates will produce a **portfolio (AO1/AO4)** in response to their devising experience and performance outcomes. The portfolio can take a variety of forms including written/recorded or a combination of both. Time limits and recommended word counts are clearly outlined in the AL specification. See page 18 for further details.

The contents of the portfolio should respond to the following 6 statements:

- Outline your initial response to the key extract and practitioner and track how it developed throughout the devising process
- Connect your research material/s to key stages in the development process and to performance outcomes
- Evaluate how your chosen role/s emerged and developed from initial ideas through to the final performance
- Analyse how your contribution was influenced by the selected theatre practitioner and or/theatre makers, and the impact live theatre has had on your own practical work
- Discuss how social, historical and cultural contexts impacted on your work
- Evaluate the creative choices you made and whether or not they were successful in performance.

In addition to the portfolio, Candidates will be assessed as performers/designers in a **devised performance/realisation (AO2)**. The mark criteria for each Assessment Objective is outlined on pages 22-33 of the AL specification.

Series specific context:

It is important to note that this series saw a return to the specification in full, pre-pandemic. No alternative methods of assessment were offered or required as this series was a return to 2019 standards for assessment.

For the second year, centres were asked to upload work digitally and this was made possible through the Learner Work Transfer platform. Both moderators and centres agreed that this process had improved. Portfolio work, supporting documentation and performance work was submitted through the LWT platform and Teacher-assessors completed administration and commentary, using NEA authentication and CCIS forms. Centres are advised to check that they are using the most current and up-to-date forms as administrative details often change during the life of a specification. The evidence on this form helps the moderator to place the work from each candidate in context and understand where and why final marks have been awarded.

Marks for this NEA component are awarded as follows:

Portfolio	60
Group Performance/Design Realisation	20
Total marks for Component 1	80

There is essential guidance for centres provided in the Administrative Support Guide. This document includes the requisite forms and instructions for Component 1. It is required for all components and includes information about all assessment procedures. It is updated annually with forms and deadlines that apply to the administration of all three components in this A Level specification.

In addition to this, centres are reminded that there are several resources available to support centres delivering the 2016 specification, which was first assessed in 2018. These include training packs, portfolio examples, commentary from the Principal Moderator and a detailed guide to completing Component 1. From the Autumn term there will be further exemplar material available to support candidates.

Online support material is available through the Pearson/Edexcel website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/drama-and-theatre-2016.html#tab-1>

Centres are also advised that the FAQ page is regularly updated, and this is designed to answer questions regarding the delivery of the specification.

Further support is available from the following services:

Subject specific content and teaching queries including *Ask the Expert* queries:
teachingperformingarts@pearson.com

Assessment administration including request for permission for non-assessed candidates, digital theatre, extension requests: drama.assessment@pearson.com

General centre related queries including reporting lost coursework, requesting special requirements, queries regarding entries and results: [Pearson Qualifications Support - Contact Us](#)

This report is designed to support centres in the delivery of Component 1 and address some of the issues raised. It will also report on the successes of this component and celebrate the work of candidates in this series.

There now follows some specific observations from the moderation team, based on centre responses to this specification in 2023.

9DR0: GCE Drama and Theatre 2023 Series

Component 1: Devising

Performance text/extract

Centres continue to have a free choice when selecting an appropriate **performance text stimulus**. However, it should offer students the opportunity to demonstrate exploratory range and depth that is appropriate to the level of demand for A level study. As outlined in the specification, the performance text must also be professionally produced and have a minimum running time of 60 minutes. It was pleasing to note that this requirement, as outlined on pages 10/11 of the A Level specification was correctly observed by all centres, this year. However, there were a few examples where candidates had *reimagined* the performance text and this is not the overall objective. In this component, students will develop their creative and exploratory skills to devise an original performance.

The **choice of texts** is generally based on teachers' preference, experience, and the suitability of text to cohort. This series, moderators reported that centres currently choose from a diverse and exciting range of performance texts that immediately engage candidates and encourage them to think about the many ways in which theatre can be used to communicate ideas to an audience.

Popular texts/extracts for 2023 included: *Metamorphosis/The Trial, Things I know to be True, 4.48 Psychosis, The Crucible, Kindertransport, The Pillowman, 100, The Crucible and The Cagebirds*. Again, several centres opted for a Greek or Shakespearean texts and this was often a successful springboard to discussion and exploration of contemporary issues and ideas. *Medea, Macbeth* and *Romeo & Juliet* were particularly popular. Moderators once again commented on the exploration of new and modern play texts being used for this first component. Playwrights including *Simon Stephens, Martin Crimp, Arthur Miller, Finn Kennedy and Laura Wade* were also popular starting points for devised work.

Candidates begin their devising experience from a performance text stimulus. Teacher-assessors should introduce candidates to a specific extract at the start of the devising process and this should 'springboard' the early stages of the component. Centres are reminded that the devising process should begin as a result of candidates being introduced to and then engaging with a key extract from a suitable performance text.

Most candidates were able to write about their stimulus text with clarity and confidence and moderators reported that a vast number of candidates were able to make links between key themes, symbols, characters and ideas that showed a clear understanding of the performance text as a whole. Once again, it was reported that in this series, some candidates struggled to consider the specifics of their chosen extract and how this moment had played a significant part in the early stages of development. This is the focus of the very first statement and it is this immediate investigation that directly links to the demands of AO1 (creating & developing). The **initial response to the extract** and how the exploration of this specific moment had shaped, developed and influenced

the early stages of the devising process is central to the early stages of devising and once again, moderators felt that low and middle scoring work failed to address the specifics of the chosen extract. Some candidates struggled to even reference what the specific extract is.

In contrast, candidates who analysed and considered how the ideas of a specific moment had developed the early stages of their devising journey were more successful in their approach. For example, one centre focused on the final moment from Brecht's, 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle' and this led to various discussions about adoption law, motherhood and parenting. Another centre explored the disclosure made in the opening scene from 'Orphans' by Dennis Kelly and provoked a discussion into how personal trauma affects people differently.

Once again, it was popular to find candidates exploring the opening or final moments of their performance text and this often helped to contextualise their response to the extract, within the narrative arc of the performance text as a whole. For example, one centre explored the opening scene from 'Macbeth' and this developed an initial response to the theme of superstition and how different cultural belief systems have changed over time. Candidates who were able to detail their early exploration of the extract and outline how creative ideas had developed as a result of their initial reaction, were often able to access marks in the higher levels. Responses and connections were often sharper and more perceptive when specifically linked to the initial reaction of the chosen extract. It was also reported that candidates achieving marks in the upper levels were able to cross-reference their extract exploration, throughout their portfolio and consideration of the performance text as a whole was not limited to statement 1.

Choice of Practitioner

Centres are also given a **free choice** in the selection of their **chosen practitioner**. However, the choice must be different to the practitioner selected for Component 3. This is clearly stated on page 11 of the specification.

Popular choices for the 2023 series included: *Artaud, Brecht, The Paper Birds, Splendid Productions and Berkoff*. Once again, non-naturalism dominated the range of work seen by moderators, however, it is important to stress that more subtle forms of theatre practice were also successful in both exploration and execution. For example, *Stanislavski and Katie Mitchell* were also popular and effective choices that influenced original work.

Less common, but nevertheless engaging and successful choices, included using the methodology of *Bruiser Theatre Company, Lecoq, Recorded Delivery, DV8, Gecko, Kneehigh, Punchdrunk* and *Complicite*. Once again, most centres picked practitioners from the list published on page 7 of the A Level specification, although centres are reminded that this is not a requirement. What is a requirement is that there is sufficient theory to support the practical exploration of the chosen methodology. As outlined on page 11 of the A Level specification: *a practitioner is an individual or a company that has an established and defined approach to the creation of performance, and which creates both theatrical performances and theory that informs this practical work.*

As in previous series, moderators did stress that the most successful performances came from those that were rooted in detailed practitioner methodology and final performances that had been developed and refined as a result of genuine influence and research were more credible, theatrically inventive and engaging to watch.

Performances that explored *several* different performance styles and methods were less clear and often lacked focus. For example, a small number of centres explored more than one practitioner influence, and this often diluted the impact of research and evaluation of final outcomes. Others combined influence from practitioners with similar approaches. For example, Stanislavski and Katie Mitchell or Artaud and Frantic Assembly were a common combination and whilst it is clear to moderators that other theatre-makers and companies may influence the devising process, the style and methodology of the chosen practitioner should dominate and contextualise the overall performance style. **Centres are reminded that the wording of the assessment criteria specifies the work of the 'chosen practitioner'.** When candidates refer to more than one major influence, they struggle to make sophisticated connections between theory and practice (AO1). Centres that explore a range of methodology often miss the depth and detail required at A level study.

There were a few examples when the methodology of the chosen practitioner was not always obvious. For example, naturalistic acting that dominated 'Brechtian' pieces or very basic physical work exploring the work of Frantic Assembly. Some moderators also reported that there were several candidates who explored the work of Artaud through traditional 'scene work' rather than movement, ritual, audience experience and other devices more commonly associated with Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty'. Moderators reported that the best examples of work were those where the influence of the chosen practitioner was central to the performance work and obvious from the start of the recording.

In a small number of cases moderators reported that *Absurd Theatre, Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett and John Godber* had been chosen as practitioners and centres are reminded that literary/theatrical movements and playwrights are not considered practitioners, even though some practitioners are playwrights. The issue with selecting a playwright as the practitioner is that the methodology is often literary, rather than theatrical and this choice does not always allow candidates to access the demands of key Assessment Objectives.

Performance work

Moderators reported that most centres offered a range of bold and adventurous work that was a pleasure to see. Candidates securing marks in the top level often presented work that was innovative, took risks and challenged audience expectations. Most candidates had engaged with the task of creating an original performance and candidates generally showed great enthusiasm in performance.

In a small number of cases, candidates had reimagined their chosen performance text and this is not the overall objective of the component. The objective is to create new and original work and moderators reported that most candidates from this series had been prepared well to take on the demands of this first component. Candidates that

fully engaged in the theatre making process should be congratulated for both their originality and integrity.

Unsurprisingly, most candidates chose to be assessed as performers, although there were several examples of design offered and this was pleasing to see. Design work that embraced the influence of the chosen practitioner was often highly inventive, effective and supportive of the performance work. Moderators commented on examples from all aspects of design although Lighting and Costume continue to be the most popular choices. There were also examples of Sound and Set design. Centres are reminded that design candidates are required to submit evidence of the 'additional documentation' as outlined on page 17 of the A Level specification. Supporting documentation should be uploaded to the LWT platform and should also be captured as a visual record at the end of the group performance.

Performances targeted to specific audiences tended to work well and moderators commented on the advantages to choosing a specific audience as it often helped candidates to fine tune the aims and intentions of their performance/design realisation. Moderators reported it was a delight to see well-attended performances, post-pandemic.

Many centres still chose to use a 'pre-show' experience to set up or introduce their performance work. This is particularly true of candidates exploring the methodology of Kneehigh. This often involved the audience and the way in which they were asked to enter the performance space. This can create engaging and provocative work, although in doing so, many centres are forgetting the importance of candidate identification at the beginning of the recording. This makes the evidence presented for moderation difficult to view. **Centres are reminded that any pre-show activity counts in the time limit for the performance.** Moderators will stop watching when the maximum time limit is reached, this will include the pre-show.

Several candidates from the 2023 series chose to explore practitioner methodology that used promenade/site specific or site sympathetic staging and centres are reminded that the recording is paramount when capturing evidence. The recording needs to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to justify the final marks awarded. For example, moderators reported problems when performers split into different venues or used multiple performance spaces and the camera only captured one specific moment. **Centres are encouraged to find a balance between the need to engage a live audience and satisfy the requirements of assessment.** The marks awarded need to be justified on the recording. Moderation of marks is evidence based and therefore the camera needs to have the 'best seat in the house'.

Candidates tended to work most effectively when the subject matter was something that resonated with their own lives and experiences or when they had researched their subject matter in depth to fully understand the issues/characters they were exploring.

Popular themes and ideas in this 2023 series included: *Gender politics, Adoption, Domestic Abuse, Isolation/Loneliness, Dreams and Nightmares, Missing Persons, Abuse, Addiction, Life as a refugee, Love/Death, the negative impact of social media, body image, misogyny, mental health, LGBTQ+ rights and of course several pieces that continue to explore the aftermath of the Global Pandemic.* Performances that

considered social issues or explored thought-provoking material were generally more successful as candidates took on the approach that they could use theatre as a medium to say something about the world in which they live. It was encouraging to see candidates challenge themselves to produce a piece of original theatre that spoke to their audience and made them question their own ideas or preconceptions.

As in previous series, moderators reported that a significant amount of work was influenced by the use of physical theatre. No doubt this is a direct result of exposure to companies such as Gecko, DV8, Frantic Assembly and Complicite. Moderators commented that when movement material was connected to the ideas in the performance, the result was often powerful and visually engaging. However, when movement or dance was unconnected, it was considered superficial, irrelevant and often lacked meaning.

Quality of recordings, group sizes and timings

The majority of centres continue to provide recordings that were clear in terms of visual and audio quality. The most effective recordings began with a clear image of the group in a long shot and candidates were then introduced by name and candidate numbers. Centres that use identification placards or on-screen sign-systems provide the most helpful visual aid to moderators. Moderators also reported that it was effective when candidates introduced themselves by name, number, role(s) (performer or designer) and distinguishing feature. The use of digital file chapters is another useful identification tool.

Centres are reminded that further guidance on 'Best practice when recording performance' is available on pages 77-78 of the A Level specification (Appendix 4).

Some centres struggled to capture a recording that was 'fit for purpose' and where that has been reported to individual centres, the Teacher-assessor would do well to take advice and improve this area of assessment. **The recording is an essential piece of evidence and teacher-assessors should do as much as possible to ensure the quality of the recording is as high as possible.** The camera should have the 'best seat in the house' to capture the dynamics and details of the performance.

Common problems reported this year included:

- candidate introductions that took place 'out of costume'
- candidates dressed in all-black or similar costumes with very little offered in terms of visual differentiation
- 'bleached out' faces due to over bright lighting
- music or sound levels that overpower dialogue
- audience members obscuring the view of the camera and therefore the view of the moderator
- the camera being placed on one side of the performance space
- the camera being placed too far away from the performance space
- the Teacher-assessor marking in front of the camera and blocking the view.

The evidence for AO2 is significantly compromised and candidates are disadvantaged when the evidence that has been captured by the centre does not support the marks awarded.

Centres are reminded to ensure performance times and group sizes comply with the requirements of the specification. Details are outlined on page 11 of the specification and in the ASG.

Some moderators reported examples of centres using **non-assessed individuals** without permission from Pearson/Edexcel. This is an infringement of the specification and permission for non-assessed individuals must be sought through Drama Assessment. It was also noted that some centres used non-assessed individuals when it was unnecessary. Again, centres are reminded to check the conditions and rules relating to non-assessed individuals in the ASG. Failure to comply with terms as stated in the ASG is an infringement of the specification and centres will be reported to the malpractice team at Pearson.

Centres that identify when a candidate is no longer part of the course significantly speed up the process of identification. Moderators appreciate that, due to the linear nature of the A Level it is now common to find students on recordings that are no longer entered as candidates. Moderators found it particularly useful when this was highlighted in the administration or on the actual recording. This is excellent practice. When centres had made no attempt to signal which candidates were no longer part of the course, this often led to confusion and slowed down the early stages of moderation.

Most centres worked within the **recommended time limits** and encouragingly, every single candidate was able to present work that met the minimum time requirement. However, moderators did report that some performances exceeded the maximum time limit allowed. It is important that teacher-assessors indicate when marking has stopped for performances. Moderators will only consider evidence that falls within the maximum time allowed.

The portfolio

All portfolios were submitted digitally this series and, as a result, almost all candidates produced written portfolios. Several candidates chose to use photographs and diagrams to document key stages of their research, development and performance work and this often helped to provide insight into their theatre-making experience. However, portfolios that were dominated by bullet points, diary style entries, role-on-the-wall and flow chart diagrams were less successful as they rarely provided enough detail to give purposeful insight into the candidates devising experience. Whilst they are each credible forms of documentation and note-taking, moderators felt that candidates who chose this style of presentation were less able to achieve marks in the upper levels. There was significant less evidence this year of candidates using 'appendices' to document their work and this is a pleasing trend. Candidates are also discouraged from an excessive use of footnotes. Centres are reminded that *'it is strongly advised that the upper word/time limits are adhered to by students to enable them to satisfy the*

requirement to produce a concise and coherently structured portfolio'. For further clarification see page 19 of the A Level specification.

Disappointingly, some moderators reported that a few teacher-assessors commented on the process of the candidate for **AO1 (Create & Develop)**. This is not a valid form of assessment. The portfolio is content driven, and teacher-assessors are reminded that there are **no marks for process in the portfolio**.

The most successful portfolios were those that responded directly to the 6 statements, as outlined on page 18 of the specification. Candidates that used the statements often wrote with a greater sense of clarity and structure. Those that did not, tended to fall into generalised 'reporting' or description of 'what we did'. There was a clear link between accurate marking and the use of the six statements. Candidates that did not address the demands of the statement were rarely able to address each assessment objective. For example, some candidates still struggle to make links between their live theatre experience and how this has influenced their theatre making process. **Live theatre** is a key feature of statement 4. It is not optional and should not be considered a 'bolt on' to their devising experience. Many candidates securing marks in the upper levels were able to deconstruct and refer to their experiences of production work across the portfolio and this often allows them to consider links between their own creative work and the influence of other professional work. For example, candidates that experienced 'Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time' were able to consider how the impact of abstract, physical sequences had influenced their own use of staging and choreography. Another centre made links between the use of sound, used in a production of 'Ocean at the End of the Lane', and their own decisions to use music to punctuate key emotional states. Some candidates did not refer to live theatre at all and centres are reminded this is both a requirement of the specification and a key feature of AO4 (Analysis & Evaluation).

As previously mentioned, it was rare to see candidates discuss their extract in enough depth or discuss its context within the wider play. Candidates often focused on the stimulus in response to statement 1 and there was no further discussion. Candidates who embedded this discussion throughout the portfolio were able to communicate a more 'sophisticated' understanding of their creative journey and not lose sight of how the extract had acted as a creative springboard for ideas, aims and intentions.

As in previous series, marks awarded for **AO1 (Theory & Practice)** were more accurate and it was obvious when candidates had or had not outlined and connected how the methodology of their chosen practitioner had impacted their creative process and production intentions. Candidates that did well were able to make succinct and relevant references to how their chosen practitioner had informed and influenced their ideas in both rehearsal and production. They were also able to reference other theatre makers, individuals and companies but kept the central focus of their reflection on their chosen practitioner. Portfolios that were unable to connect practical exploration to practitioner theory were less successful. Candidates scoring marks in the higher levels were able to 'sprinkle' and 'pepper' their theory, connected to their practice, throughout the final document. It was reported that some candidates struggled to make connections between theory and practice (AO1) or engage with the exploration and execution of their practitioner methodology, on paper. This is a requirement of the portfolio and, as

stated in previous reports, candidates that were too biographical or literary in their response to practitioner methodology often failed to make connections with their own work. Low-scoring work also included simple description of practitioner theory without connecting to their own exploratory or performance experiences. Isolated theory and research that did not address the demands of the assessment objective often led to some mark adjustments. For example, “Berkoff’s acting style is exaggerated” with no further example or explanation rarely justified marks in the upper levels. Equally a simple list of techniques used by Brecht or Artaud did not warrant marks in the middle or upper levels. When candidates did offer detailed practical examples, connected to relevant practitioner theory, they were able to communicate a genuine creative journey and link to a clear decision-making process.

Teacher-assessors were most confident in rewarding **AO4 (Analysis & Evaluation)**. Many candidates embedded evaluation and analysis throughout their work communicating a continually reflective process. Candidates evaluated the effectiveness of practical exploration and analysed the significance of their research. Some candidates only offered evaluation only in response to statement 6 and were rewarded with marks in level 5. This often led to mark adjustments. Centres are reminded that evaluation should consider both personal discovery and audience intentions. **The intended outcome of the performance is paramount in the evaluation of both process and final performance.** Moderators reported that evaluation that was explicitly linked to trial and error, performance outcomes and audience impact was more effective. Candidates are also discouraged from writing about what they did not do. The recommended word limit is 3,000 words and therefore it is unhelpful if candidates waste words acknowledging what they might have done, what they intended to do or why they originally explored a different practitioner.

Moderators also commented that candidates who were able to link contextual relevance and research to their creative and production process were able to access marks in the higher levels. Isolated context or research was often irrelevant and lacked connection to their devising experience. Some candidates included responses from audience questionnaires which was helpful to an extent but those that connected personal feedback to aims and intentions were more successful. When candidates used this to support their discussion or prompt further analysis it was a relevant addition. However, there were candidates who relied heavily on these questionnaires and consequently failed to offer their own personal response and their discussion lacked any depth.

As ever, the most effective portfolios were those that were personal and succinctly responded and engaged with the demands of each statement. High-scoring work detailed the experience of the candidate within an exploratory and production context, and outlined how research, context and practitioner methodology had contributed to the influence and success of their final devised performance.

Annotations and recommended word count

Many centres helpfully annotated their students’ work so that moderators were able to follow their thinking. The moderator’s task is considerably eased when annotations show how the assessment criteria have been applied. *This cannot be stressed enough.*

Digital annotation was particularly helpful and serves the candidate well. This year, a small number of moderators were forced to send work back to centres when it did not offer enough reasoning to why final marks had been awarded. Centres are reminded that whilst annotation is not a requirement, it is considered best practice. Teacher-assessors are also advised to ensure the level of marking and annotation meets the regulatory requirements, as outlined by JCQ standards. Further information can be found on page 11 of the following document, 'Instructions for conducting non-examined assessment'.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/>

In some centres, there was evidence of genuine departmental standardisation and cross-moderation of work, something that is essential for the security of marks awarded to students in centres where there is more than one teacher-assessor. Where teacher-assessors note how students' writing/recording fulfils the needs of the portfolio, moderators report that they can more easily agree the marks awarded, than if they have to search for evidence. **This is particularly important when work is submitted in continuous prose.** Once again, centres are reminded that either the candidate or the teacher-assessor must clearly indicate where each of the 6 statements are addressed. Moderators found that detailed comments on the NEA authentication/CCIS form often helped them 'to see' and understand where and why marks had been awarded. At A Level, it is not optional to complete comments for this form. It is a requirement. However, it is less helpful when the words of the assessment criteria are simply copied and repeated for the moderator. Personal, bespoke and pertinent commentary allows the moderator to 'see' how the teacher-assessor has really considered final marks.

It is pleasing to note that most candidates were able to submit work within the **recommended word count**. This is an improvement from previous series. Again, the use of LWT allowed moderators to verify word counts and centres are reminded that over long work should be cut out at the first draft stage. Moderators reported examples of excellent practice where teacher-assessors had drawn a line across the page of work to indicate to the moderator that the recommended word limit had been reached by the candidate and the centre had stopped marking.

Administration

The administration for this component is now completely digital and centres are thanked for taking such time and care to upload the work of their students. The following guidance is designed to ensure that all administration for this component is correct.

Edexcel/Pearson is aware that the administration of this component has significantly changed since the launch of this specification and centres are thanked for their cooperation and advised to regularly visit the Edexcel homepage and ASG to ensure that the documentation being used is the most current version.

The following observations were made in this series:

- Most centres ensured their work arrived on time and in good order. Work that was late or incomplete, significantly slowed down the early stages of moderation.
- **Consortium centres must indicate this arrangement with Drama Assessment and make it clear on the CCIS form.**
- Once again, moderators commented on several arithmetical/addition errors. Teacher-assessors are strongly advised to check the addition of candidate marks carefully and contact Edexcel Online when mistakes have been made. There were often discrepancies between the NEA authentication form, the CCIS form and the marks uploaded to Edexcel Online.
- Centres are politely reminded NOT to upload NEA authentication or CCIS forms in PDF format as moderators need to access the file to record their moderation of marks.
- Centres are reminded that all scanned work should be checked carefully, prior to submission. Several pieces of portfolio work were incomplete as scanned documents often missed 'one side' of the paper.
- Candidates must ensure that their *Name, Number and Component code feature in the header of their work. Page numbers should also be used.* This detail is outlined on page 8 of the JCQ document.
- As previously mentioned, most teacher-assessors provided personal and pertinent comments for each area of assessment. Teacher-assessors that offer specific examples of where candidates had met key aspects of the mark criteria often guided the moderator through the process of awarding marks. Several teacher-assessors highlighted specific moments from the performance and included time reference points. This helped to signpost evidence to the moderator. This is excellent practice. A small number of centres simply copied the same generic comments for each candidate, and this provided little insight into how final marks had been awarded. Equally, repetition of assessment criteria wording provides little insight into the specific achievements of the individual candidate.
- Most samples of work were correct. A small number of centres needed to be contacted regarding the work of their highest/lowest attaining students. This administrative error significantly slows down the early stages of moderation. Centres are reminded that if **it is a requirement to upload work from the highest and lowest candidate**, if they are not part of the original sample request.
- In most cases, documentation had been correctly signed and this is pleasing to note.
- Where centres requested special consideration for students or felt there were circumstances that meant the work of students was not as strong as it should be, they were referred to Edexcel/Pearson directly. Centres are reminded that a formal

request for special consideration is always advisable, and these should be made through the examinations' officer to the specific department at Edexcel/Pearson and not through the moderator. This is also the case for 'lost coursework'. The moderator can only award marks for evidence that is available.

- The overall quality of recordings was satisfactory although this is clearly the most important area of administration to get right. Centres are once again advised to look at Appendix 4 (pages 77-78) in the specification for further guidance on ways to ensure this evidence is captured successfully. Poor recordings significantly compromise the validity of assessment.

High-scoring work was felt to show some of these features:

- Students had clearly been given the advantage of practice that engendered confidence and risk taking
- Creative group performances/design realisations that were and innovative and embraced the style and methodology of the chosen practitioner
- Performance work that encouraged a range of skill and control in terms of character, communication, voice and physicality
- Performance work that met all required and recommended time limits
- Performance/design realisation was dynamic using a range of creative choices to engage and create impact on an audience
- Portfolio content was driven by the 6 statements and used the language of the questions/statements in the response
- Portfolios that used a personal voice throughout. Students referred to their own work, not just that of their group. They made use of 'I' rather than 'we'
- Portfolios that offered a balance between analysis and evaluation
- Students' practical examples were embedded in their writing, across all the statements
- Portfolio research was connected to key stages in the development / exploration / production process
- Consideration of contextual awareness and the impact on the work
- Strong use of subject-specific vocabulary used to support ideas
- Theory and practice are connected. Understanding is embedded in portfolio and performance work/design realisation

- Students work independently to present their artistic aims and intentions before an audience. Ownership comes from a genuine sense of exploration and understanding
- Portfolios were concise, perceptive, and made full use of the recommended word limit
- Teacher-assessor comments were detailed and specific, allowing the moderator to 'see' examples of how and why marks had been awarded.

Low-scoring work was felt to show some of these features:

- Group performances/design realisations that were poorly executed in performance and did not sufficiently embrace the methodology of the chosen practitioner
- Performance work used a limited range of skills
- Performance work did not meet the regulatory or recommended time limits
- Portfolio content was unclear and often ignored the demands of the 6 statements. Some candidates failed to address the content of all of the statements and therefore some content was missing when mapped to Assessment Objectives.
- Portfolios struggled to find a personal voice
- Portfolios showed a lack of analysis or isolated analysis without sufficient evaluation
- Students found it difficult to offer practical examples in response to the 6 statements/questions
- Portfolio research was either missing, superficial, minimal, or unconnected to key stages in the development / exploration / production process
- Lack of consideration towards the contextual impact on the work
- Theory and practice often unconnected or irrelevant
- Limited subject-specific vocabulary used to support ideas
- Performance work was under prepared or lacked focus, energy
- Portfolios significantly exceeded or struggled to meet the available number of words
- Centres were poorly organised, had lost coursework, did not present appropriate recording evidence, had not carried out centre standardisation or did not have specialist drama staff to deliver the component.

In conclusion, most centres had served their students well and proved to have a firm understanding of the demands of this first component.

Based on the evidence presented for moderation, students have engaged in the challenge of devising and several were able present innovative, creative and engaging pieces of original work.

Moving forward centres should:

- Ensure that the key extract is specifically referred to in the final portfolio and connected to the wider context of the performance text
- Ensure candidates use the 6 statements to structure the content of their portfolio evidence
- Ensure the methodology of the chosen practitioner is dominant in both the performance/design realisation and portfolio
- Ensure the recording captures the best possible evidence to support the marks awarded for AO2
- Ensure all design documentation is made available to the moderator
- Ensure the evaluation of audience intention is a key feature of AO4
- Ensure references to live theatre are connected to the overall devising experience
- Regularly look at the ASG and support material available on Edexcel Online.

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